



## **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION “RFI”**

Date: June 12, 2008

Title: Universal Eligibility Portal

Issuing / Using Entity: Virginia Healthcare Exchange Network  
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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Virginia Healthcare Exchange Network (VHEN) is committed to a collaborative public-private model limiting unnecessary administrative costs in healthcare and speeding the adoption of tools and processes that can achieve that goal. VHEN is seeking Statements of Interest (SOI) from private entities to create a web-based, multi-payer eligibility verification tool. VHEN will consider responses to this Request for Information (RFI) and determine funding and next steps based on availability and quality of proposals. Project proposals should address these objectives:

- 1) Require no or very minimal changes to the existing infrastructure of the participants
- 2) Serve as an aggregator for the provider
- 3) Search and retrieve data from existing databases maintained by the participants
- 4) Facilitate both real-time and batched inquiries
- 5) Meet all HIPAA requirements for privacy and security

The primary focus of the Universal Eligibility Portal is to prove that a light-weight, multi-payer portal without transaction costs can be effective in Virginia. The website should allow providers to check at no cost a patient's eligibility for any of the participating health plans in one location rather than needing to access a separate website or database for each plan.

### **II. BACKGROUND**

On July 1, 2007, a group of Virginia health care providers and health plans chartered VHEN with two explicit goals:

- 1) To adopt and apply the CAQH CORE Phase I operating rules to exchanges of eligibility transactions among Virginia payers and providers
- 2) To evaluate additional approaches for reducing costs of collection, payment, and approvals, and where justified, engage in further defined, collaborative, and measured efforts to streamline healthcare administration in the Commonwealth of Virginia

VHEN believes that this eligibility portal will serve as a vital tool in the effort to limit unnecessary administrative costs in healthcare in the Commonwealth of Virginia. By streamlining the process of data exchange between providers and payers, the portal will serve to enhance the interoperability between these

two parties. Most importantly, this portal will substantially reduce the amount of time and resources providers spend on administrative functions – time better spent with patients.

### III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONSES

Respondents should submit a concise SOI that should include:

- 1) A brief statement of interest in pursuing the project for a Universal Eligibility Portal
- 2) An outline of the proposed structure of the portal as well as a brief description of how it will solve the need presented by this RFI
- 3) A road-map to implement the full HIPAA transaction set (eligibility, claims, remittances, referral/authorization) over time and an analysis of how this proposal will position VHEN to capitalize on data exchange opportunities in the future
- 4) A summary of topics or issues that will arise upon the implementation of this portal not identified by the RFI, as well as input on how to respond to those topics or issues

In keeping with VHENS previous commitment to adopting CAQH's CORE rules for members the eligibility portal should be designed to leverage CORE standards to speed the useful exchange of large transactions. Integrating the CORE standards into the eligibility product will allow both health plans and providers to benefit from increased information exchange as they move to adopt the CORE rules.

In a separate procurement, Virginia's Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), which is the state agency responsible for managing the Commonwealth's Medicaid program, will be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for implementation and maintenance of a HIPAA-compliant, web-based application for direct data entry of CMS-1500 and UB04 Medicaid claims. The target audience for using this application is small to medium-sized providers who currently submit paper claims. The RFP has a targeted release date of August 2008, with a projected implementation date of January 2009.

As part of its RFP, DMAS will require that all applications proposed support a multi-payer environment. In the response to this RFI, vendors are encouraged to propose solutions that would leverage this functionality for future integration into the VHEN web portal. This will support VHEN's future vision of a portal that is fully enabled to support all HIPAA transaction sets.

Staff will also conduct a dialogue with respondents as well as seek out more information in support of the response. As part of the dialogue process suggestions for improving responses may be given to respondents by staff. Updated responses will be accepted up until the deadline. Therefore, early responses are encouraged.

SOI's shall be returned by 4:00 PM Eastern Standard Time, Friday, August 15, 2008, by mail or electronically. Electronic responses should be addressed to: [bevans@vhha.com](mailto:bevans@vhha.com). Include **Universal Eligibility Portal Response** in the subject line. Non-electronic responses will also be accepted. Please send to:

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c/o Christopher S. Bailey  
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Glen Allen, VA 23060

Electronic inquiries are preferred at [bevans@vhha.com](mailto:bevans@vhha.com), however, respondents may also call 804-965-1218 for additional information.